

Quick Summary: This section provides a summary of the following plans and policies and how they relate to pedestrian facilities in Hertford:

- ◆ Historic Hertford North Carolina Development Strategic Plan (2001)
- ◆ Hertford Corridor Plan Phase I: US 17 (Draft 2007)
- ◆ NCDOT TIP
- ◆ Town's Subdivision Ordinance

Section 4. Existing Plans and Policies

4.1. Introduction

In order to thoroughly address Hertford's pedestrian needs, it is necessary not only to understand the Town's existing physical conditions - sidewalks, greenways, roadway crossings – but also how they are planned and designed. This section describes Hertford's current plans, policies, and programs which relate to the pedestrian system in the Town. These include the *Historic Hertford North Carolina Development Strategic Plan (2001)*, *Town of Hertford Corridor Plan Phase I: US 17 (Draft 2007)*, planned NCDOT projects, and the Town's ordinances.

4.2. Existing Plans

In recent years, Hertford has begun to experience a renewed interest in its downtown. In 2000, the Town became part of the North Carolina Main Street Program which emphasizes a four-point approach to improving downtown by organizing partnerships, promoting services and events, designing aesthetic improvements, and improving marketability. Since then, efforts to redevelop the downtown and the overall appearance of the Town have been underway. As part of this movement, both the Historic Hertford North Carolina Development Strategic Plan (2001) and the Town of Hertford Corridor Plan Phase I: US 17 (Draft 2007) outline future improvement projects for the Town. In addition to the Town's plans, Hertford's pedestrian system is also affected by projects planned by the North Carolina Department of Transportation. The following paragraphs describe in more detail the plans of both the Town and NCDOT.

Historic Hertford North Carolina Development Strategic Plan (2001)

The Historic Hertford North Carolina Development Strategic Plan is as a five-year plan for improvement of the Hertford Heritage Tourism Development Area of the historic Town of Hertford, North Carolina. It was prepared as an extension of the report, *A Vision for Heritage Tourism* (1999), and incorporates the findings and recommendations of the Town's 2001 planning initiatives, including the Town's initial Main Street Program Report. The Plan provides information on priority improvement areas and major projects, and a strategic action plan which serves as a summary reference of overall actions recommended on all priority areas. The priority areas and major projects are as follows:

Priority areas

- ◆ Business Development and Land Use
- ◆ Streetscape Improvements
- ◆ Sign and Identity System
- ◆ Parking and Connectivity

◆ Waterfront Enhancement

Major Projects

- ◆ Business Development
- ◆ Planning and Zoning
- ◆ Utility Removal and Reconstruction
- ◆ Streetscape Design and Construction
- ◆ Courthouse Grounds Improvements
- ◆ Academy Green Improvements and Dobbs Street Walkway
- ◆ Sign and Identity System
- ◆ Parking Improvements
- ◆ Waterfront Improvement

Four of the five priority areas are directly pedestrian-related, and all but one of the nine major projects also have pedestrian elements.

Some of the projects which are discussed in the Development Strategic Plan are as follows:

- ◆ Potential boardwalk from WRC boat ramp to Missing Mill Park
- ◆ Streetscape improvements along Grubb Street and Academy Street
- ◆ Church Street walkway
- ◆ Major gateway on Church Street on the Winfall side of the S-bridge
- ◆ A walkway along the S-bridge
- ◆ Focal points at Front Street pier and Grubb Street piers
- ◆ Historic walking tour
- ◆ Greenway along Castleton Creek to connect to Church
- ◆ Streetscape enhancement at the following intersections: Market & Church, Dobbs & Church, and King & Church
- ◆ Wayfinding signage system

In addition to discussing projects, the plan also provides design guidance for street enhancements and wayfinding signage. This guidance is discussed more thoroughly in Section 5 of the Pedestrian Plan.

Perquimans County, North Carolina CAMA Core Land Use Plan (2006)

The Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA) requires North Carolina coastal communities in 20 counties to prepare management plans for dealing with the impacts of growth on coastal and coastal tributary ecosystems. The 2006 version ("CAMA Plan") that was reviewed contains a



Figure 4-1. A sign near the Perquimans County Courthouse in Downtown Hertford discusses Hertford's National Register Historic District.

number of general statements relevant to the discussion of the Pedestrian Plan, including the following.

- ◆ Many of the incoming residents are expected to be middle-aged or retirement age, which raises issues with accessibility to services.
- ◆ The County is to continue to educate its citizens about desirable development patterns; however, resource levels are low to technically implement different development standards.
- ◆ The CAMA Plan also discusses an initiative by Trailblazers, a volunteer group that is building a greenways/blueways system plan. The CAMA Plan also stresses the potential importance of ecotourism.
- ◆ In terms of future development, the land use plan component of the CAMA Plan does not specifically speak to pedestrian considerations, although it does encourage.

The CAMA Plan does not carry the weight of regulatory authority, but compliance with the recommendations of the CAMA Plan is often used as a determining factor in State and Federal permitting considerations. In short, the CAMA Plan is focused on preservation of water quality, but also includes recommendations in the Action Plan concerning the development of a county-wide greenway system, revisions to the existing subdivision standards, and creating public access at the Commerce Center. Each of these action steps can be a springboard to include pedestrian accommodations or make travel by walking easier or more enjoyable.

Town of Hertford Corridor Plan Phase I: US 17 (Draft 2007)

The Town of Hertford Corridor Plan Phase 1: US 17 is the first of several plans for corridor improvements to be produced by the Hertford Corridor Project Committee. A result of the strategies identified in the 2001 Hertford Development Strategic Plan, this Committee was created to study land use, transportation, and future development potential for thoroughfare corridors and gateways in Hertford and to develop a plan to protect and improve the appearance of and views from these roadways through Hertford and into the National Register Historic District that includes downtown Hertford. The study area for the Corridor Study was

- ◆ US 17 within Hertford and its ETJ,
- ◆ Lands from Castleton Creek south to US 17 including Church Street, Ballahack Road and Edenton Road Street, and
- ◆ From US 17 south to Commerce Street including the Commerce Center Project and its extension across to Wynne Fork Road including Wynne Fork Road and Harvey Point Road.

As part of the *Town of Hertford Corridor Plan Phase 1: US 17*, the Hertford Corridor Project Committee developed a vision for the US 17 Corridor, which included: "Walkways and bicycle facilities throughout Hertford connecting parks, waterfront access, shopping and neighborhoods support an active lifestyle and a sociable setting for peoples of all ages." In addition to presenting the Corridor Committee's vision, the Plan includes an analysis of the issues along the study area, guiding principles for improvements, and a series of recommendations. A Visual Preference Survey was also conducted to identify town residents' preferences for design features in the Town.

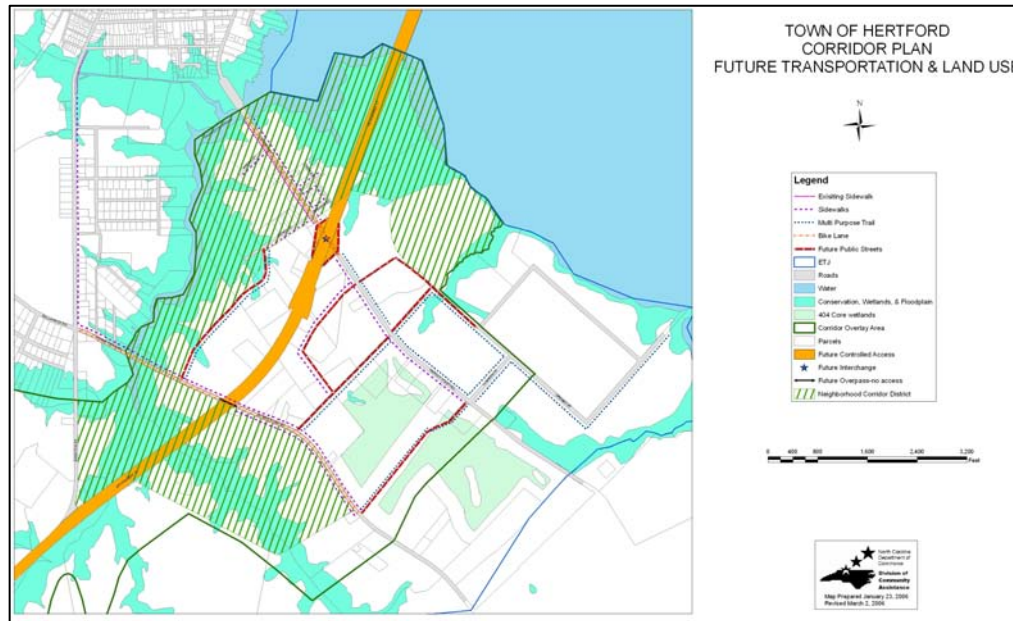


Figure 4-2. 2007 Draft Town of Hertford Corridor Plan Future Transportation & Land Use.

Some of the issues which are identified by the Plan include:

- ◆ Perquimans County is experiencing a boom in development, particularly in areas with waterfront accessibility and water views.
- ◆ The Highway 17 Corridor does not provide clues to motorists that Hertford has an attractive, inviting downtown area on the waterfront.

- ◆ Many current residents in Hertford do not have access to a vehicle and must walk, bike, or rely on others with vehicles for rides. Other residents like to walk or bike for fitness or pleasure.
- ◆ The sidewalk on Church Street is very important because it connects the intersection at US 17 with downtown Hertford and residential areas in Hertford. Residents use the sidewalk for fitness walking and to walk to the grocery store and other shopping located along US 17.
- ◆ The intersection of Church Street and Highway 17 is the prominent entrance way into Hertford and the only access from Town to the only grocery store in Hertford and the Perquimans County Recreation Center. Currently, this intersection is dangerous for pedestrians, which include children walking or bicycling to the Recreation Center. The signal is designed to maximize vehicle through-put along US 17, and therefore there are no pedestrian heads and inadequate time for pedestrians to cross. As more businesses relocate to the US 17 corridor and to the Commerce Center, a safe way for pedestrians to cross US 17 will be even more critical.
- ◆ NCDOT has plans to create a grade-separated interchange at the US 17/Church Street/Harvey Point Road intersection and grade separation with no access to US 17 at the Wynne Fork Road and US 17 intersection. When these changes are made to US 17, local access will be fragmented. The only way to the US 17 corridor area from Town will be along Church Street. Access for pedestrians and bicyclists will become more difficult.
- ◆ Pedestrian facilities should be provided along all streets and within commercial developments in the US 17 corridor area.

The Plan also contains five guiding principles. Of these, three principles addressed items related to pedestrian facilities in the Town:

- ◆ The Highway 17 corridor sets the image of Hertford to motorists, which should therefore be positive.
- ◆ From US 17, one should sense and or learn from way-finding signage that the downtown and historical center of Hertford is nearby and has an inviting charm.
- ◆ The project area should be accessible to all pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists. It should be safe to cross US 17.

The Corridor Plan makes the following recommendations which relate to pedestrian facilities in the Town:

- ◆ When the proposed interchange at Church Street/Harvey Point Road is completed, a well planned, connected local street network with access to properties in the project area will be critical. The plan should include pedestrian and bicycle facilities along local collectors.

- ◆ Improvements as a result of the Corridor Study should provide the citizen an option of routes between destinations and the opportunity to drive, walk or bike to a destination.
- ◆ Sidewalks are recommended:
 - Along the north east side of Church Street
 - Along streets intersecting Church Street
 - Along the southwest side of Harvey Point Road
 - Along both sides of Wynne Fork Road
 - Along proposed streets into and through the shopping center area south east of US 17
- ◆ Multi-purpose facilities area recommended:
 - On the north east side of Harvey Point Road
 - Along streets in the commerce center
 - On one side of the proposed roadways between Harvey Point Road and Wynne Fork Road
 - On one side of the proposed connector road between Wynne Fork Road and Berry Street
- ◆ The Study recommends two overlay districts: (1) US 17 Overlay District, (2) Neighborhood Corridor District. Both containing recommendations for pedestrian facilities to require sidewalks along street, pedestrian connections between building entrances, sidewalks, and parking areas. Sidewalk connections should also be required between parcels. For the US 17 Overlay district, traffic calming in parking areas is recommended as needed to allow for safe pedestrian crossings.

In addition, some of the findings of the Visual Preference Survey related to pedestrian facilities in the Town and may affect the recommendations made by this Pedestrian Plan. These findings were:

Design Features which rated favorably include:

- ◆ In commercial parking areas, trees and a sidewalk separating bays of parking and leading to business entrance
- ◆ sidewalk separated from the street with vegetation that includes trees
- ◆ wide sidewalks
- ◆ human scaled amenities including benches, flowers, banners, and ornamental lights
- ◆ integrated landscaping and sidewalk
- ◆ ornamental features including lighting, banners, flowers, and street trees

Design Features which rated poorly include:

- ◆ no trees adjacent to sidewalk
- ◆ multi-use facilities for pedestrians and bicycles
- ◆ sidewalk on multilane street with no trees and utilitarian lights on tall poles

- ◆ sidewalk adjacent to the travel lane

Although the Corridor Study focuses primarily on the US 17 Corridor, its recommendations for sidewalks, ordinances which require pedestrian connections, and good design features can be applicable throughout the Town.

NCDOT TIP Plans

According to the *Town of Hertford Corridor Plan Phase I: US 17* (Draft 2007), NCDOT is considering a grade separated interchange at the US 17/Church Street/Harvey Point Road intersection and a grade separation with no access to US 17 at the Wynne Fork Road and US 17 intersection. According to the NCDOT 2007 – 2013 STIP, both of these projects are listed under TIP No. R-4459, which is labeled as programmed for planning and environmental study only at this time.

Additional planned TIP projects in the Hertford area are R-4467 and B-4923, described in the table below. Although listed separately in the TIP, R-4467 and B-4923 will likely be designed and constructed at the same time due. R-4467 includes the causeway in addition to the S-bridge, whereas B-4923 is simply the S-Bridge.

TIP No.	Location	Description	Status
R-4467	US 17 Business/ NC 37 bridge over the Perquimans River	Construct a new roadway on pilings or convert roadway to a bridge.	Programmed for planning and environmental study only.
B-4923	US 17 Business over the Perquimans River	Replace bridge No. 8.	ROW FY 2012 Mitigation FY 2012 Construction FY 2013

4.3. Existing Policies

Currently, the Town's subdivision ordinance requires that new development have curb-and-gutter on streets, provide underground wiring, and plant street trees that are located on private property. It also requires the dedication of future rights-of-way for streets in accordance with adopted maps and plans. However, the ordinance does not require sidewalks to be installed along public streets, although it does have an optional requirement for pedestrian easements, walkways or alleys if a block is greater than 1,000 feet long. An ordinance revision should be considered to include mandatory sidewalk and greenway easement requirements connecting adjacent properties, as well as sidewalk on one side of all interior streets regardless of length. Converting this language from a Planning Board option to a staff-level option (or requirement)

would strengthen the language (Section 6-2.8). Additionally, the preliminary plat requirements could be expanded to require a vicinity or location map indicating the location of parks, schools, commercial centers, and other pedestrian destinations within a ¼-mile radius (Section 5-2.3 part A).

The Town's current zoning ordinance (May 19, 1980) covers the Town as well as its Extraterritorial Jurisdiction and has the stated purpose of, among other things, to provide for:

"...light and air; to prevent the overcrowding of land; to avoid undue concentration of population; to facilitate the adequate provision of transportation, water, sewerage, schools, parks and other public requirements; to promote desirable living conditions and the sustained stability of neighborhoods; to protect the property against blight and depreciation; to protect and enhance the visual character and quality of the built environment." (Article 1, Section 1-4)

The zoning ordinance details specific requirements for individual land uses, then proceeds to discuss specific design elements, the following of which are pertinent to pedestrian travel and accommodation:

- ◆ Off-Street Parking (Article V). Number of spaces and requirements are listed, but there is no mention of the location relative to the building. Additional information about parking location, such as that 50% should be required to be placed to the side or rear of the structure, would produce a better walking environment by bringing building faces closer to the street. Requirements for pedestrian connections or, at a minimum, easements, between adjoining commercial and commercial/multi-family residential properties would also facilitate shorter pedestrian travel distances.
- ◆ Landscape Regulations (Article XIII). Updating this section to include graphics and text illustrating the desired relationship between buildings, buffer areas, pedestrian ways, and swales would be a useful step towards creating a best practice for development. Requiring wheel stops to be at least three feet from the nearest pedestrian way would help to ensure that parked cars do not intrude into the pedestrian space.

Generally, the ordinances in Hertford, in conjunction with developing street design standards, would benefit from a close review throughout and making modifications that are integrated. For example, specifying when a sidewalk should be installed (on one side of the street or both) on various hierarchies of streets.

Land-Use/Roadway Functional Classification/ Dwelling Unit	New Urban and Suburban Streets	Existing Urban and Suburban Streets
Commercial & Industrial (All Streets)	Both sides.	Both sides. Every effort should be made to add sidewalks where they do not exist and complete missing links.
Residential (Major Arterials)	Both sides.	Both sides.
Residential (Collectors)	Both sides.	Multifamily - both sides. Single Family dwellings - prefer both sides; require at least one side.
Residential (Local Streets) More than 4 Units Per acre	Both sides.	Prefer both sides; require at least one side
Residential (Local Streets) 1 to 4 Units Per Acre shoulder on both sides required.	Prefer both sides; required at least one side.	One side preferred, at least five feet width.
Residential (Local Streets) Less Than 1 Unit Per Acre	One side preferred, shoulder on both sides.	At least 4-ft. shoulder on both sides required.

NOTES:

- 1) Any local street within two blocks of a school site that would be on a walking route to school - sidewalk required on at least on side.
- 2) Sidewalks may be omitted on one side of new streets where that side clearly cannot be developed and where there are not existing or anticipated uses that would generate pedestrian trips on that side.
- 3) Where there are service roads, the sidewalk adjacent to the main road may be eliminated and replaced by a sidewalk adjacent to the service road on the side away from the main road.
- 4) For rural roads not likely to serve development, a should at least 4 feet in width, preferably 8 feet on primary highways should be provided. Surface material should provide a stable, mud-free walking surface.

Source: Wisconsin DOT, "Wisconsin Pedestrian Planning Guidance: Guidelines for Metropolitan Planning Organizations and Communities in Planning and Developing Pedestrian Facilities." September, 1993

Figure 4-3. Sample Pedestrian Guidelines (*adapted from Wisconsin DOT*).

4.4. Summary

Hertford's various Plans focus in general on creating a more vibrant downtown area and improving the Town's existing major roadway corridors. Most of the planned projects center around the area along Church Street/US 17 Business, extending from the intersection with Harvey Point Road through town and across the river to Winfall. The Historic Hertford North Carolina Development Strategic Plan calls for a variety of improvements, including those to the streetscape and waterfront; any improvements should always focus on ensuring pedestrian safety and access. Beyond downtown, major planned transportation projects include improvements to the Church Street/US 17 area, the potential replacement of the US 17 Business bridge (the S-Bridge) over the Perquimans River, and the conversion of the intersection of US 17/Harvey Point Road to an interchange. These projects are an excellent opportunity for the Town to provide key links which are currently missing from the existing pedestrian system. As they progress forward in design, they should be coordinated with the recommendations in the Pedestrian Plan in order to maintain existing pedestrian access and create better future pedestrian access.